

From: [Gray, David](#)
To: [Elinson, Zusha](#)
Cc: [Press](#)
Bcc: [Grantham, Nancy](#); [Bowman, Liz](#); [Graham, Amy](#)
Subject: RE: FW: Questions on disclosure about Harvey hazards
Date: Sunday, September 24, 2017 3:06:00 PM

Sure. After a hurricane, we often find all types of containers that have been 'orphaned' from their original location. Most of the ones that the state has us handle are 55 gallon drums. They can come from lots of different places and contain a variety of chemicals. We collect them, move them to safe storage, test them, and then work to send them for proper disposal.

Here are some picture to help give you an idea.



U.S. EPA on-scene coordinators secure a flammable container as part of the agency's Orphan Container Recovery program.



U.S. EPA and USCG inspect and recover a large container near Aransas Pass. Hazardous material in containers are sampled and disposed of properly.





U.S. EPA on-scene coordinator inspects orphan containers at a staging area in Corpus Christi. Materials are sampled and coded for proper disposal.



U.S. EPA on-scene coordinator inspects orphan containers at a staging area. Materials are sampled and coded for proper disposal.



U.S. EPA on-scene coordinator surveying an orphan container before directing its removal.

From: Elinson, Zusha [mailto:zusha.elinson@wsj.com]
Sent: Sunday, September 24, 2017 2:55 PM
To: Gray, David <gray.david@epa.gov>
Cc: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: FW: Questions on disclosure about Harvey hazards

Can you explain what these orphan containers are and where they are from? Why would they have hazardous material?

On Sun, Sep 24, 2017 at 12:36 PM, Gray, David <gray.david@epa.gov> wrote:

Hi Zusha,

Thanks for the email. It appears that the FEMA summary in its release on Friday has created some confusion by combining our submission from the original. We wrote:

***Hurricane Harvey Texas Response and Recovery
EPA and TCEQ First 30 Days Roll-Up of Actions (EPA fully integrated with Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in Unified Command to support these actions.)***

- *Drinking Water Assessments:*
 - *625 on-site drinking water assessments completed*

- *Waste Water Assessments:*
 - *441 on-site waste water assessments completed*
- *517 orphan containers recovered for proper storage*
- *43 National Priorities List Superfund Sites assessments completed*

FEMA wrote:

*The **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**, working with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, completed 625 drinking water assessments and 441 waste water assessments. The agency conducted assessments of 43 Superfund sites and recovered 517 containers of unidentified, potentially hazardous material.*

You can read our latest update from Friday Sept 22 on our website at www.epa.gov/hurricane-harvey. We the latest on Superfund sites and many individual site summaries.

Regarding orphan containers. EPA and our response partners have been collecting containers orphaned after the hurricane. We have been reporting these activities. Here is a copy of that update. [These are not related to Superfund clean ups.](#)

Reconnaissance/Orphan Containers: The TCEQ continues to lead in monitoring facilities that have reported spills. Unified Command has completed reconnaissance activities associated with hurricane impacts. Orphan containers, which include drums and tanks, found floating in or washed up near waterways continue to be gathered, sorted and grouped by type, prior to shipping them off for safe, proper treatment and disposal. All branches of the Unified Command have collected over 980 orphan containers. The Unified Command is preparing collected oil and hazardous materials for proper disposal. Disposal should be completed within the next three weeks. USCG and Texas General Land Office will continue to complete Vessel Recovery activities.

Best,
David

From: Elinson, Zusha [<mailto:zusha.elinson@wsj.com>]
Sent: Sunday, September 24, 2017 11:43 AM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Questions on disclosure about Harvey hazards

Hi there - We are doing a story on the following disclosure:

The **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**, working with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, completed 625 drinking water assessments and 441 waste water assessments. The agency conducted assessments of 43 Superfund sites and recovered 517 containers of unidentified, potentially hazardous material

Can you please elaborate on what the 517 containers of hazardous material were and whether or not people are at risk because of the material?

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Zusha Elinson



M: [415-297-3016](tel:415-297-3016)
O: [415-765-6110](tel:415-765-6110)
E: zusha.elinson@wsj.com
T: [@ZushaElinson](https://www.instagram.com/ZushaElinson)

*IAPE Local 1096: **We Power Dow Jones.***

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Zusha Elinson



M: [415-297-3016](tel:415-297-3016)
O: [415-765-6110](tel:415-765-6110)
E: zusha.elinson@wsj.com
T: [@ZushaElinson](https://www.instagram.com/ZushaElinson)

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